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LBJ Warns Of Perils in ABM Race

President Stresses Determination to Reduce Tensions

By Murrey Marder
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President Johnson put maximum emphasis yesterday on the need to head off a new arms race with the Soviet Union just when "our mutual antagonism is beginning to ease."

"I am determined," the President said, "to use all the resources at my command to encourage the reduction in tension that is in our mutual interest, and to avoid a further, mutually defeating (arms) buildup."

Mr. Johnson's newest and strongest warning over the danger of an antimissile missile race came in a letter to Congress. It accompanied the sixth annual report of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency which showed, the President said, the "immensity" of that task.

White House Press Secretary George Christian told newsmen:

"The President considers this problem of disarmament and arms control as the most important problem on the agenda of this government and of the entire human race."

By coincidence, news reports from Moscow yesterday newly asserted that the Soviet position is negative on discussing with the United States any ban on deploying antimissile missile systems. American officials, however, refused to accept those reports as authoritative at this stage, and maintained that in any event, they do not rule out discussions of both offensive and defensive weapons.

President Johnson said "recent developments in the Soviet Union" are a reminder that "our hard-won accomplishments can be swept away overnight by still another costly and futile escalation of the arms race."

He pointed to "the buildup" of Soviet "strategic forces and the deployment of an antiballistic missile system around Moscow."

"It is my belief," said the President, "that the United States and the Soviet Union have reached a watershed in

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Pravda erred in indicating Soviet willingness to discuss missile ban, Moscow source says. Page A10.

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